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SUBJECT: January 22 MFA Press Briefing: President Obama's Inaugural Speech, Guantanamo Bay Detainees, Sanlu Group Trial, Sino-French Relations

11. Key points at the January 22 MFA Press Briefing:

-- MFA Spokesperson was "not aware" of President Obama's inaugural speech having been censored when broadcast on Chinese media, adding that the media in China enjoyed their "own editing right."

-- China hopes the "relevant parties" will adhere to international law when considering the release of Chinese Guantanamo Bay detainees to countries other than China.

-- The trial of Sanlu Group's former executives is being "strictly handled by law," and China is paying "great attention" to food safety and relevant monitoring mechanisms.

-- China will hold a series of cultural events this year to commemorate the establishment of Sino-French relations, but the "setback" in bilateral relations must be addressed by France.

Obama's inaugural speech

12. At the regular MFA press briefing on January 22, MFA Spokesperson Jiang Yu said she was "not aware" of Obama's inaugural speech having been censored when broadcast on Chinese media, and added that in any case the media in China enjoyed their "own editing right." When asked to respond to the fact that President Obama referred to the defeat of communism and the right to dissent in his speech, Jiang said that all countries should "work to build a harmonious world" and that China hopes President Obama's foreign policy will be conducive to global peace and stability.

13. When pressed specifically about President Obama's pledge to improve human rights and civil liberties, Jiang stressed that the President's comments were not directed at one country, and that China "respects and protects" human rights, a value enshrined in its Constitution. She added that because China is at a preliminary stage of socialism, it needs to "improve its human rights," as do all countries of the world. She pointed out that China "works hard towards this goal" to promote human rights, has already signed some twenty international conventions, conducted dialogues with over twenty different countries and has "good contact" with the UN Commission on Human Rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion.

Guantanamo Bay

14. When asked whether or not U.S.-China relations would be harmed if Chinese detainees from Guantanamo Bay were released to a country other than China, Jiang said that she hoped the "relevant parties" would adhere to international law, adding that Chinese terrorists must be "handed to China" which would in turn "handle the case by law."

Sanlu Trial

¶15. The trial of Sanlu Group's former executives is being "strictly handled by law," said Jiang when asked about recent developments in the case, adding that China is paying "great attention" to food safety, has strengthened its relevant rules and regulations, and has cooperated with the international community to improve its food safety monitoring mechanisms.

Visit to DPRK

¶16. The Chinese Communist Party (CPC) delegation to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), led by CPC International Liaison Department Director Wang Jiarui, is a "normal exchange" between the two countries, said Jiang, referring more specific questions about Wang's agenda to "relevant departments."

Iran

¶17. Jiang said she had no information about an upcoming meeting on Iran to be held in Berlin next month, but that China hoped "dialogue and consultation" would continue to maintain regional stability and that diplomatic efforts would "improve."

Middle East

¶18. On the situation in the Middle East, Jiang said that China welcomes Israel's withdrawal from Gaza as conducive to easing tension in the region. She added that China expected both sides to

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implement Security Council Resolution 1860 to "promote stability and the rebuilding of Gaza."

Sino-French relations

¶19. China will hold a series of cultural events this year to commemorate the establishment of Sino-French relations forty-five years ago, said Jiang. However, the "setback" in relations between China and France is not China's responsibility, she added, and China expects France to bring bilateral relations "back on track," as the "doer has to undo what he has done."

Chinese kidnapped in Burma

¶10. Jiang had no information about a group of Chinese teens kidnapped and taken to Burma, and referred all questions to the Ministry of Public Security.

Press briefing schedule

¶11. Jiang announced that due to the Spring Festival, MFA press briefings on January 27 and January 29 will be cancelled. The next regular press briefing will be held on Tuesday, February 3.

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